



AUGUST 1994

ODDS AND ENDS

THIS ISSUE of The Voice of the Valley is being distributed not only to members of the Task Force but also patrons of gay-friendly establishments in the Lehigh Valley.

If you like what you see, and you like what the Task Force is doing, please consider becoming a member. Membership information can be found on page 6.

A NOTE to early supporters of the Task Force: If you joined prior to June 30, 1994, your membership won't expire until June 30, 1995. Those who joined after June 30, 1994 will be members for a full year from the date they joined.

PEOPLE WHO have creativity and drive are urgently needed to help raise money through events, newsletter ads, sale of merchandise and solicitation of companies or organizations. Call Co-Chairs Kim Snyder at 437-5915 or Art Hall at 252-8471.

The Voice of the Valley

Published by
the Lehigh Valley
Gay and Lesbian
Task Force
P.O. Box 20253
Lehigh Valley, PA
18002-0253

Editing and page design
by Frank Baran

THE VOICE OF THE VALLEY

The Newsletter of the Lehigh Valley Gay and Lesbian Task Force / Vol. 1, Issue 3

The push is on for equal rights in jobs

By **FRANK BARAN**
Communications Committee Co-Chair

Legislation has been introduced in Congress to outlaw discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation.

U.S. Sen. Edward Kennedy and Reps. Gerry Studds and Barney Frank are the prime sponsors of an Employment Non-Discrimination Act which would extend similar protections to people based on gender, race, religion, national origin and ethnicity.

Currently eight states and nearly 100 cities accord gay men and lesbians the constitutional rights other people take for granted. Eighteen more states have executive orders banning discrimination in state government employment.

In Pennsylvania, employers are free to fire or refuse to hire or promote anyone they know or assume is gay.

The Human Rights Campaign Fund is making the employment bill a focal point in its effort to win full civil rights for gay men, lesbians and bisexuals.

MORE INFO

For some ideas on how you can make change happen, see page 3.

"A victory would set an historic precedent, and would open the door to future victories to protect gays and lesbians from other forms of discrimination," said Daniel Zingale, HRCF public policy director.

Unlike the failed attempt last year to end discrimination in the U.S. military, the employment bill is expected to win wider support.

"Last year, many who opposed lifting the ban on gays in the military gave lip service to the American ideal that employment opportunities should be based on skill and performance. It's just that the military is different, they said. In civilian life, they'd never condone discrimination," wrote former U.S. Sen. Barry Goldwater.

"Well, now's their chance to put up or shut up."

➤ Please see **JOBS** on Page 2

HATE CRIME

Task Force urges Allentown panel to study anti-gay violence

The Lehigh Valley Gay and Lesbian Task Force is helping the Allentown Human Relations Commission plan a seminar in September to combat hate crimes.

The commission said it expects a few hundred people to attend the seminar, which will deal with all forms of violence and discrimination aimed at particular classes of people.

Currently the Human Relations Commission has the power to intervene in cases of discrimination on the basis of race, religion and gender.

The Task Force would like to see sexual

▼ Most hate crimes in Allentown are committed against gays and Hispanics.

— **Ann DeLazaro**
Chairwoman of the city's
Human Relations
Commission

orientation added to the list of people protected in employment, housing and public accommodations.

The change is not up to the Human Relations Commission, however. It would require approval by City Council.

The Task Force hopes to persuade Council that anti-gay violence and discrimination is a serious problem. If you've been the victim of

hate crimes or bias, contact a member of the Task Force's Discrimination Committee so we can add your case to the list.

Four members of the Task Force board of directors met with the Human Relations Commission on July 13 to discuss hate crimes and anti-gay bias. The commission named all four of them – president Manny Gonzalez, vice president Chris Ackner and board members Liz Fox and Renae Bennett – to a steering committee to prepare for the September seminar.

The date of the seminar has not been announced.

Lehigh Valley businesses beginning to awaken to gay-related concerns

By KEVIN SPRAGUE
Communications Committee

There are few places in the Lehigh Valley where gay and lesbian consumers can feel comfortable.

Nor is it easy to find a workplace that is accepting of gay and lesbian individuals.

We may choose to come out to a few close co-workers, but very few work in enough ease to place a partner's photograph on our desks or to discuss openly one's partner in day-to-day socialization.

However, some local businesses are taking steps to assure comfort to gay and lesbian workers and patrons.

One local furniture retailer, Unclaimed Freight, has added an anti-discrimination clause to its hiring policy. There is also discussion of making available domestic partnership insurance. Currently there are just a few organizations in the Lehigh Valley with this kind of insurance coverage.

Anti-discrimination clauses are more common, especially among corporations which have operations in other states where the anti-discrimination clause is required.

Several area businesses, including Air Products and Chemicals and AT&T, have well known and highly active organizations within the company for gay and lesbian employees.

Brentano's bookstore in the Lehigh Valley Mall is widely known in the valley as a promoter of gay literature. The Moravian Book Shop in Bethlehem has also jumped on the bandwagon with its recent promotion of Mary Borhek's book which tells of her son's coming out and how she dealt with it.

You would be hard pressed, however, to find gay and lesbian literature at Walden Books in the Lehigh Valley Mall. You may be able to find books about being gay in the Psychology or Women's Studies sections.

Several local firms make the top 100

Leading corporations and institutions are also leading advocates for the gay community.

Ed Mickens' list of "The 100 Best Companies for Gay Men and Lesbians" includes several with offices in the Lehigh Valley.

Gay-friendly employers with local ties include:

- ▼ AT&T (Basking Ridge, N.J.)
- ▼ Ben & Jerry's Homemade Inc. (Waterbury, Vt.)
- ▼ CoreStates Bank (Philadelphia)
- ▼ IDS Financial Services (Minneapolis)
- ▼ National Organization for Women (Washington, D.C.)
- ▼ Planned Parenthood (New York)

Nationally, many high-tech corporations are named on Mickens's list. They include Microsoft Corp., Lotus Development Corp., IBM and Apple Computer Inc.

Makers of consumer products – Celestial Seasonings Inc., Eastman Kodak, Levi Strauss and Co., the 3M Group, RJR Nabisco, and Procter and Gamble – all are regarded as gay-friendly.

Industrial firms such as Dow Chemical, DuPont, General Motors, Pitney Bowes and Xerox also rate highly, according to Mickens.

JOBS

➤ Continued from Page 1

Although the bill has support across the political spectrum, the HRCF said enacting the legislation will still be an uphill fight that will require the energies and commitment of the gay community and our allies.

The HRCF was buoyed by a Newsweek poll released in February showing that 74 percent of Americans favor protecting gays from job discrimination.

Furthermore, a survey by the HRCF found that 71 of the nation's 100 senators and 235 of its 435 members of the House of Representatives claim sexual orientation is not a consideration

in the hiring, promoting or firing of employees in their congressional offices.

Among those making the pledge were Pennsylvania Sens. Arlen Specter and Harris Wofford and Rep. Paul McHale.

The Clinton administration has been gradually extending civil rights to federal employees. The latest additions include the FBI and civilians in the U.S. Navy.

About 25 percent of the top 1,000 companies ban employment discrimination based on sexual orientation. These include such Fortune 500 giants as AT&T, RJR Nabisco, General Motors and Marriott, as well as high-tech firms such as Lotus Software and Apple Computer.

But the vast majority of employers do not have policies against discrimination.

The HRCF said it is working with members of Congress and organizations to arrange hearings on the legislation, the first step toward passage.

"We need you to communicate to members of Congress the reality of job discrimination against lesbians, gay men and bisexuals, and the importance of eliminating it through federal legislation," the HRCF said.

"And since members of Congress need the support of their constituents, you must let them know that you support their efforts to pass an Equal Employment Opportunity Act."

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Let the folks in Washington know how you feel ...

SAMPLE LETTER

Dear Senator/Representative

I urge you to support the Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 1994 (S. 2238/H.R. 4636). This bill, which has been introduced by Senator Edward Kennedy and Representatives Gerry Studds and Barney Frank, would outlaw discrimination in employment against an unprotected segment of the American population - lesbians, gay men and bisexuals.

According to a professional poll commissioned by the Human Rights Campaign Fund, 76 percent of Americans believe that people should not be fired or discriminated against in employment because of their sexual orientation. Yet, every day, many hard-working, patriotic Americans are.

Cheryl Summerville was fired from Cracker Barrel Old Country Store Inc. despite her exemplary record because she objected to the firing of a fellow employee for being gay. Her separation notice read, "This employee is being terminated due to violation of company policy. The employee is gay." Cracker Barrel has fired over a dozen people under this policy.

Discrimination based on prejudice hurts our economy and spirit, and violates the fundamental American values of fairness and equality. Please stand up to fear and ignorance by supporting the prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation. I would appreciate your thoughts on this matter. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Source: Federal Advocacy Network

WHO TO WRITE

The Federal Advocacy Network offers this sample letter to urge lawmakers to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. These are the lawmakers' Washington and local addresses and phone numbers.

U.S. Rep. Paul McHale

■ 511 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515-3815; phone 202-225-6411.

■ 26 E. Third St., Bethlehem, PA 18015; phone 866-0916.

■ Hamilton Financial Center, 1 Center Square, Suite 203, Allentown, PA 18101; phone 439-8861.

■ 1603 Lehigh St., Easton, PA 18042; phone 258-8383.

■ 168 Main St., Pennsburg, PA 18073; phone 541-0614.

U.S. Sen. Arlen Specter

■ U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510

■ Lehigh Valley office, Fifth and Hamilton streets, Allentown, PA 18101; phone 434-1444.

U.S. Sen. Harris Wofford

■ U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510; phone 202-224-6324.

■ Philadelphia office, 9456 Green Federal Building, 600 Arch St., Philadelphia, PA 19106; phone 215-597-9914.

The legislation in brief ...

▼ Prohibits employers, employment agencies and labor unions from using an individual's sexual orientation (real or perceived) as the basis for hiring, firing, promotion or compensation. It extends fair employment practices - not special rights - to Americans already protected on the basis of race, religion, gender, national origin, age and disability.

▼ Protects lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and heterosexuals.

▼ Exempts small businesses, as do existing civil rights statutes, and does not apply to employers with fewer than 15 workers.

▼ Exempts religious organizations and sectarian educational institutions.

▼ Prohibits preferential treatment, including quotas, based on sexual orientation.

▼ Does not require an employer to provide benefits for the same-sex partner of an employee.

▼ Does not apply to the military.

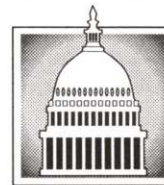
▼ Provides for the same remedies (injunctive relief and damages) as are permitted under Title VI and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

▼ Applies to Congress.

▼ Is not retroactive.

Outside the Beltway

A good time to catch Rep. Paul McHale is at one of two town meetings planned for the next few weeks. McHale invites



constituents to speak their minds on:

August 30 at 7:30 p.m. in the Palmer Township Library, 1 Willard Place (off

Northwood Avenue).

September 1 at 7:30 p.m. in the Upper Perkiomen High School, Pennsburg.

Aides to Sens. Arlen Specter and Harris Wofford said no town meetings are scheduled for the Lehigh Valley in August or early September. They suggested, however, that constituents watch their newspaper for possible announcements.

Task Force elects officers, approves bylaws

The Lehigh Valley Gay and Lesbian Task Force is off and running.

The Task Force elected its first slate of officers and board members at its Founders Meeting on May 23, and approved bylaws spelling out how the all-volunteer group is to be operated.

Elected as president was Dr. Manny Gonzalez, who has been serving as co-moderator of the group since the inception of the interim steering committee in June 1993. The other officers are Chris Ackner, vice president; David P. Charrier, clerk; and Steve Black, treasurer.

Eight board members were also chosen. They are Renae Bennett, Liz Fox, Linda Mich, Michelle Strohl, Jacqueline Marish, Jim Truver, Rev. Peter Helt and Art Hall.

The board members' two-year terms are staggered to ensure continuity in the Task Force's operations. Those chosen by lot to serve two-year terms were Bennett, Charrier, Fox, Hall and Strohl.

Those whose term will expire next year are Black, Helt, Marish,

Mich and Truver. In the 1995 election, candidates will be elected to two-year terms.

The president and vice president will serve two-year terms.

The Founders Meeting produced a few surprises.

✓ Steve Black decided not to run for president, explaining that his commitments with the League of Gay and Lesbian Voters precluded his serving as head of the Task Force. He was elected by acclamation as treasurer.

Kurt Sauer and Barry Thomas dropped out of the running for seats on the board, and several people were nominated from the floor at the Founders Meeting.

Those elected from floor nominations were Jim Truver, who had sought the vice presidency; Art Hall; and Michelle Strohl.

The bylaws were adopted unanimously as presented by the Systems and Structure Committee, which was headed by the Rev. Peter Helt.

A total of 46 people participated in the Founders Meeting, sufficient for a quorum under the bylaws.

Election results

PRESIDENT

✓ Dr. Manny Gonzalez	25
Rev. Peter Helt	21

VICE PRESIDENT

✓ Chris Ackner	37
Jim Truver	9

CLERK

✓ David Charrier	Acclamation
------------------	-------------

TREASURER

✓ Steve Black	Acclamation
---------------	-------------

BOARD MEMBERS

✓ Renae Bennett	43
✓ Liz Fox	41
✓ Linda Mich	38
✓ Michelle Strohl	35
✓ Jacqueline Marish	33
Dianna Walls	15
✓ Jim Truver	29
✓ Rev. Peter Helt	24
✓ Art Hall	22
Frank Baran	21
Robert Roush	18
Ulysses David	7
Kevin Sprague	4
Fernando Rios	2

Local women protest sexist, anti-gay T-shirts in Ocean City, Md.

At least eight merchants on the boardwalk in Ocean City, Md., displayed anti-gay T-shirts, according to two Bethlehem women who were vacationing there.

The T-shirts came in two versions: One with the Trix cereal rabbit and the wording, "Silly Faggot. Dix Are For Chix." The other had a smaller version of the logo with the wording, "Silly Faggot. Dicks Are For Chicks!"

Lisa Albrecht and Kelly J. McFadden, Bethlehem residents who were visiting Ocean City on June 23, said they were angry and outraged that merchants were displaying hate-provoking T-shirts.

They called Glenda Eliason of General Mills, the makers of Trix cereal, at 1-800-328-1144 to inform them of a copyright infringement of the Trix rabbit.

They also took pictures of the

T-shirts and sent them to gay and lesbian groups and publications.

Albrecht and McFadden then called the Ocean City Chamber of Commerce at 410-213-0552 to let chamber officials know that one style of shirt had "Ocean City, Maryland" emblazoned across the top.

Finally, they called Ocean City Mayor Roland "Fish" Powell at 410-289-8221.

A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING

Professional Handyman



20 Years Experience
610-252-8471

Senior Discounts
Free Estimates

Arthur Hall
Palmer, PA

GRAPHIC LANGUAGE

Blending words and art to get your message across

RESUMES ▼ BROCHURES ▼ NEWSLETTERS ▼ STATIONERY
LOGOS ▼ PERSONAL AND BUSINESS ADS ▼ FLYERS
MAPS ▼ CHARTS ▼ GRAPHICS
CAMERA-READY ART

FRANK BARAN

610-691-7653

Your help is needed on Task Force projects

The Task Force won't succeed unless everyone takes an active role.

We are preparing an ambitious education program to counter homophobia.

We are monitoring the local news media and responding to anti-gay newspaper, radio and TV coverage.

We are developing a plan to make young people more sensitive to gay-related concerns – and to give young gay people the support they need.

All of this, of course, takes energy and dedication.

There are plenty of opportunities for you to work for the cause of equality and justice. Join one of the Task Force's committees.

You don't have to be a Ph.D. Common sense is all you need. You don't have to be a polished orator. The force of your actions speak louder than words. You don't have to be in the limelight. Most of the committee work is done behind the scenes, so you can decide how public you want to be.

Volunteering for the Task Force will take a little bit of your time, but in the long run you will feel better knowing you helped make a difference.

COMMUNICATIONS

Gathers news and prepares newsletter; monitors local newspaper, radio and TV coverage of gay-related issues; prepares news releases for publication.

Urgent needs: ad representative, writers (news or features).
Co-chairs Robert Roush and Frank Baran.

DISCRIMINATION

Works to combat anti-gay bias and hate. Current activities include meeting with public officials and police chiefs, and developing a system for recording hate crimes and discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations.

Urgent needs: Allentown residents who could tell the city's Human Relations Commission about hate crimes and anti-gay bias.

Co-chairs Steve Black and Renae Bennett.

FUNDRAISING

Plans and conducts campaigns to raise money for Task Force projects and programs.

Urgent needs: people who could raise funds, solicit contributions

and help market merchandise at gay-related events.

Co-chairs Kim Snyder and Art Hall.

MEMBERSHIP

Seeks out new members through personal contact or activities in our community; issues membership cards.

Co-chairs Liz Fox and Michelle Strohl.

NOMINATIONS

Arranges elections for officers and board members.

Chair Linda Mich.

SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURE

Examines effectiveness of Task Force policies and procedures, and recommends changes if needed.

Co-chairs Rev. Peter Helt and Jacqueline Marish.

YOUTH ISSUES

Presents "sensitivity training" to faculty and staff of educational institutions; will develop a booklet on support resources for gay and lesbian youth through high school and college counselors, organizations and events.

Co-chairs Chris Ackner and Rev. Peter Helt.

Do you know what your local officials are up to?

We need watchdogs.

The Task Force is looking for volunteers to monitor the meetings of city councils and county governments.

The need is especially acute in Allentown, where the Task Force hopes to persuade City Council to empower the city's Human Relations Commission to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation.

We need to know what municipal officials are saying and doing. Much of what goes on is not covered by the daily newspapers or broadcast media. We need to know the attitudes of public officials on gay-related concerns such as crime, police protection and discrimination. It's also a good way of finding out about what's happening in your hometown.

Volunteers would attend meetings once or twice a month. The meetings are held in public, and you do not have to identify yourself or explain why you are there. It would be helpful, though, if you are willing to be visible and speak out if the need arises. Public officials tend to put greater weight on thoughtful remarks coming from a person they know and see often.

Let the Task Force know if you hear anything – good or bad – coming from public meetings.

Allentown City Council

Date: first and third Wednesdays

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: Council Chambers, first floor of City Hall, 435 Hamilton St.

More info: Call the clerk's office at 437-7539.

Bethlehem City Council

Date: first and third Tuesdays

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: Town Hall (circular building between City Hall and the Library)

More info: Call the clerk's office at 865-7130.

Easton City Council

Date: second and fourth Wednesdays

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: Council Chambers, second floor of City Hall, 650 Ferry St.

More info: Call the clerk's office at 250-6600.

Lehigh County Commissioners

Date: second and fourth Wednesdays

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: Site varies. On the fourth Wednesday of the month, it's always at the Commissioners' Office, Room 711 of the courthouse, 455 Hamilton St. On the second Wednesday, the commissioners visit outlying towns.

More info: Call the Commissioners' Office at 820-3050.

Northampton County Council

Date: first and third Thursdays

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: Council Chambers, fourth floor of the courthouse, 669 Washington St., Easton.

More info: Call the Council office at 559-3195.

Coming attractions

What's happening in the Lehigh Valley

Task Force meeting

The Lehigh Valley Gay and Lesbian Task Force will have its next board meeting on Wednesday, August 17, at 7:30 p.m. in Room 115 of College Center on the campus of Northampton Community College off Green Pond Road in Bethlehem Township. Meetings are open to members and potential members.

Voters League coordinator

The League of Gay and Lesbian Voters (Lehigh Valley Chapter) is seeking an individual to serve as coordinator.

The coordinator is a volunteer position with responsibilities that include attending the LGLV state board meetings, Voters' Guide distribution, candidate questionnaires and some fund-raising.

For more information, please call 758-7636.

Live Personals at the Wall

It's live. It's fun. And it serves a good cause.

The Stonewall presents Live Personals on Friday, August 19.

Want to catch the eye of a favorite somebody at the bar? For \$1 you can place an electronic message to him or her. The message is flashed on a screen.

Proceeds from the Live Personals will be split between the Task Force and the League of Gay

and Lesbian Voters.

Pride annual meeting

Pride of the Lehigh Valley will hold its annual meeting on Sunday, September 25, at 4 p.m. at Grace Covenant Fellowship Church, 10th and Chew streets, Allentown. Officers and board members will be elected. Everyone is welcome. For more information, call 264-9369.

Gay Men's Chorus

Do you have a song in your heart?

The Lehigh Valley Gay Men's Chorus is looking for singers.

If you are interested in becoming part of the start-up group, call 740-0247 and leave your name and number and a message on how organizers can contact you. The Grace Covenant Church, 10th and Chew streets in Allentown, will offer rehearsal space.

FACT Summer Games

FACT will have its ninth annual Summer Games at Rainbow Mountain Resort in the Poconos on Sunday, September 11, from noon to 7 p.m.

A full day of outdoor team competition and special events will help raise funds to support educational and direct services for those infected with or affected by the AIDS virus.

For tickets or information, call FACT at 820-5519.

**Jacqueline
Marish, M.A.**

Counseling



Recovery

A.C.O.A.

Spiritual

Assertiveness

Feminist Issues

1322 Center Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018
610.865.1006

Get the word out!

Do you want to reach the Lehigh Valley gay community with your product or service? An advertisement in The Voice of the Valley is the way to go.

The Task Force newsletter is distributed to members and patrons of gay-friendly establishments in Lehigh and Northampton counties. Total circulation is 1,000.

Advertising rates

Full page	\$150
Half page	\$75
Quarter page	\$50
Business card	\$25

Advertising deadlines

October edition	September 20
December issue	November 20

To place an ad, call 691-7653.

JOIN US...



... in making the Lehigh Valley a better and safer place to live. You can help by becoming a member of the Task Force.

Name _____

Street address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Municipality (City, borough, township) _____

Telephone _____

\$15 Basic membership
☐ Benefits: mailing list, referral database, volunteer opportunities, lesbian and gay community information, newsletter, a vote in meetings.

\$10 Student or senior member
☐ Benefits: Same as above. However, students under 18 do not vote.

\$25 Family membership
☐ Benefits: Same as basic member. This category is for domestic partners and their children living in the same household. Each person gets 1 vote, for a maximum of 2 votes per family. Children under 18 do not vote.

\$30 Organizational member
☐ Benefits: newsletter, referral database, free listing in newsletter. No vote.

☐ Contributor
Help the Task Force pay for mailings and other start-up expenses. Your donations would be very much appreciated.

I'd like to get involved in a Task Force committee:

- ☐ Communications
- ☐ Discrimination
- ☐ Fundraising
- ☐ Membership
- ☐ Nominations
- ☐ Systems and Structure
- ☐ Youth Issues

Make check or money order payable to:

LVGLTF

P.O. Box 20253

Lehigh Valley, PA 18002-0253